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C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 000088

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/11/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [SN](#)

SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER TEO ON SECURITY TIES AND  
COUNTERTERRORISM

Classified By: Ambassador Patricia L. Herbold for reasons 1.4(b)/(d).

11. (C) Summary: During the Ambassador's introductory call on Minister of Defense Teo Chee Hean, Minister Teo stressed the importance of active U.S. engagement with Southeast Asia. He affirmed that the U.S.-Singapore security relationship was built on strong institutional ties and common values. Ambassador Herbold thanked Minister Teo for Singapore's support in Iraq and its early and enthusiastic support of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). She said the United States and Singapore should work together even more closely in counterterrorism and non-proliferation, and highlighted the example of Iranian and North Korean WMD shipments. End Summary.

#### Bilateral Mil-Mil Relationship

12. (C) Minister Teo pointed to the importance to Singapore of the United States' stabilizing role in Southeast Asia. Singapore wants a strong and open region and would like the United States to remain actively engaged here. Some of Singapore's neighbors, in contrast, prefer a closed region in which they can have preeminence. Minister Teo noted that, when Singapore and the United States signed the 1990 MOU that allows U.S. forces to use Singapore facilities, the United States was "not universally welcome" in Southeast Asia. Over time, he said, the region has come to realize the value of the U.S. presence.

13. (C) Minister Teo noted the success of the recently signed Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA), which facilitates more mutual training and exercises along with enhanced technology exchanges. Minister Teo expressed appreciation for the many training opportunities in the United States for RSAF units. He observed that one-third of all foreign ship visits to the Changi Naval Base are U.S. Navy ships, and that Changi has hosted 14 U.S. aircraft carrier visits -- three to four per year since the pier was completed.

#### Iraq

14. (C) Ambassador Herbold reaffirmed U.S. appreciation for Singapore's support in Iraq. She added that, as we hand over more security responsibilities to the Iraqis, it is important for coalition partners to maintain a united front against terrorists. Minister Teo responded that Singapore has been glad it could help bring stability to Iraq in practical ways and also demonstrate political support for the United States.

#### Non-proliferation and Counterterrorism

15. (C) Ambassador Herbold noted that the United States gratefully recognizes Singapore's contribution as an early partner in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), and appreciates Singapore's efforts to encourage its neighbors' participation in PSI. Minister Teo said that the United States and Singapore are not always in lock step on all issues but that we share basic interests and a regional/world view. He assessed that the fight against terrorism was moving to an ideological phase and hoped that we would work in parallel to the extent possible to change how people think about extremism. Pointing to the importance of interdicting shipments of WMD materials to companies from Iran and North Korea, the Ambassador urged that we work even more closely on counterterrorism and non-proliferation.

HERBOLD